1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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326 in the dry season will sell for 1s. 4d. in the rains. In these two busiest
434 months of the year, then, the profits of the blacksmiths may be as much
435 as 7d. on every hoe, or over 1s. a day (one man can produce two hoes a day). The blacksmiths of the *Dokodza* group in Bida seem very satisfied with their economic situation. But the blacksmiths in the country, and
326 also the blacksmiths of the other, smaller, guild sections in Bida, are
434 bitterly complaining of the decline of native blacksmith trade. Some of
477 these country blacksmiths have turned farmers, or have at least taken up
178 farming on a larger scale than formerly, in order to balance the losses of their industry. This retrograde movement is due to a variety of causes. One which has affected all blacksmith groups in the country equally, is the competition of European trade. Thus the Nupe blacksmiths have lost almost their entire trade in bush-knives to the European trading-stores; nor does the once very extensive trade in Bida hoes which the Hausa caravans used to take north exist any more. The iron smelters have suffered most severely under this competition. As we have seen, their work has been almost completely disorganized under the pressure of European competition. Other causes affect the blacksmiths in the country more than in the town, and smaller groups more than larger.
● [437] The scarcity of money among the peasants has forced certain farmers in Kutigi, for example, who were unable to pay in money for the hoes which they needed, to offer a half-day's work on the farms of the blacksmiths in lieu of payment.[1] Closer intercourse and the increased facilities of transport between town and country have also deflected some of the former custom of the village blacksmiths to Bida, where, owing to the presence of the European trading-stores, there is less danger of a shortage of raw iron occurring in the busiest time of the year. A final, more subtle, cause of the decline in blacksmith trade, which attacks smaller groups more severely than larger, lies in the failure of the former to meet successfully the demands of what we have called 'maintenance of labour'. This influence will become clear when we examine the second aspect of co-operation in native industries, namely, the co-operative organization of the professional group at large.

Guild Organization

326 The term 'guild' is applied correctly only to the Bida blacksmiths,
467 whose organization shows the characteristic features of the guild system —the closed profession, centralized control, the hierarchy of ranks and grades. However, the individual blacksmith groups in Nupe, in Bida as well as in the villages, are all modelled on very similar lines—although the guild sections in Bida are organized on a larger scale, and also more closely and efficiently. Moreover, the control of the Bida guild system extends in certain respects over the whole country and the various independent local blacksmith groups. This widest professional unit is the result of political rather than economic factors; it is expressed mainly in

[1] Prices in the country are higher than in Bida. In Kutigi a heavy hoe is sold for 1s. to 1s. 6d. The difference in price seems chiefly due to the fact that the Kutigi blacksmiths must obtain their iron through middlemen who bring it from Bida, as there is no European store in the village.

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CHAPTER XVIII

WEALTH

THE examination of the problem of labour may be fittingly concluded with a discussion of the role played by wealth, free capital, in Nupe economy. It is in keeping with Nupe production in general, with its emphasis on individual property and money profits, that the concept of wealth should be clearly pronounced. The principle of accumulation of wealth as free capital pervades Nupe economics and, in particular, serves to define the economic (and, indirectly, social) stratification of the society.

MONEY CAPITAL

The appreciation of wealth figures prominently in the educational conceptions of the people. Young boys of 8 or 10, when they are given a separate *bucd* plot to farm, are at the same time taught the value of money income and money capital. Mothers will help them to market their small produce for money, or will buy their produce directly from them. And fathers and mothers, as we have seen, equip their children with a first diminutive working capital, a penny or two, to start a profitable trade (see pp. 286–7, 331). These profits enable boys and girls to defray the expenses of the social obligations incumbent upon this tender age, namely, contributions to the costs of the age-grade associations of which they are members. Money expenses, partly involving the accumulation of reserves, accompany Nupe men and women all through their lives: money to meet the costs of kinship rituals—birth, weddings, and funerals—money for the maintenance of labour, the purchase of tools, &c., or for personal wants and the luxuries of life. Money also frequently forms part of the inheritance left by men or women.

Farm produce or gifts in kind in general cannot fully replace money expenditure. This is shown clearly in the nature of the universal gift in Nupe—kola-nuts. Gifts of kola-nuts are more or less regularly exchanged between friends and relations; a gift of kola-nuts serves as the traditional announcement, and invitation at the same time, extended to kinsfolk at the occasion of forthcoming kinship ceremonies. Gifts of kola-nuts also represent the traditional expression of political allegiance. And, with the insignificant exception of the kola-nut growers, the donor of the gift has to buy the kola-nuts on the market for money. The largest single expenditure of Nupe economy, finally, bride-price, is paid entirely in money (see the discussion of bride-price in Chap. XX). It involves, moreover, accumulation of money reserve, or, if the bride-price is paid in instalments, as it frequently is, careful planning of money expenditure over a considerable period.

Although none of the larger forms of traditional money expenditure were ever replaceable by gifts or contributions in kind, it is also true that the practice of money expenditure has been increasing with the spreading of cultural influences from the town. It is natural that Bida society,

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with its large population of non-farmers, should have developed the practice of money expenditure more extensively than the villages, and adopted money expenditure in certain instances in which, in the village, gifts and contributions in kind were the custom. The universal practice nowadays of giving and accepting presents of kola-nuts, for example, appears to have spread from the town, and to have replaced gifts of food or sorghum beer. Of similar changes in other fields we possess even more concrete evidence: thus the name-giving ceremony or funeral feast involves to-day contributions in money by guests and relations; in Mohammedan districts it is also customary to distribute alms (again in money) among the local Mallams. In the traditional form these kinship ceremonies implied gifts in kind, i.e. contributions of food and sorghum beer for the feast. Formerly, also, every household used to produce its own beer; to-day the manufacture of beer is limited to certain households so that the other families are obliged to buy it for money. Moreover, sorghum beer has been replaced in the town by palm-wine, which, as palm-kernels are largely imported from districts outside Nupe, must again be bought (see p. 234).

It is necessary to emphasize that this change represents a change of customs and fashion, and a change in the *form* of expenditure, rather than a change, or an increase, of expenditure itself. We shall, in fact, see later that the modern Mohammedan burial, for example, may come cheaper than the pagan ceremony, although in the latter contributions and gifts were largely in kind. In other words, the symbols of wealth are changing and becoming more unified, being adjusted to the symbols of wealth which have been adopted and standardized by the social and cultural *élite* of the country.

How, then, are money reserves and wealth in general accumulated? One method, which is widespread in Nupe, is to hoard money by burying it. Sometimes valuables, above all, precious beads, take the place of money, and are buried or concealed otherwise in a safe place. In a number of court cases over inheritance the question of discovering the hidden wealth (money or beads) of the testator played an important part. Another illustration of the practice of hoarding money came to my knowledge in connexion with inquiries into the continued use of cowrie-shell currency.[1] It is generally known in Nupe country that when cowrie-shells were finally replaced by English money and the former currency declared worthless many people buried their cowrie-shells in the hope that, some day, they might become legal tender again. Once I asked certain informants in Kutigi if they could show me any cowrie-shells. They said that they had none, and that cowrie-shells were no longer to be found in the country. I said that I was prepared to pay money for them, whereupon large baskets full of cowries suddenly turned up, and, the rumour having spread that the white man was buying cowries, I had to do my best not to be inundated with the suddenly rediscovered currency.

Another method of accumulating capital is the investment in interest-

[1] See 'A Ritual Currency in Nigeria—A Result of Culture Contact', in 'Notes and News', *Africa*, 1937, 3.

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transport, enter into the calculation of price and profit.[1] Finally, the economic significance of 'waiting' is fully recognized, and goods sold are at a proportionately cheaper price when they can be disposed of in larger quantities. I found, for example, that a trader on the market would sell two bowls of grain for 1½*d.*, but one bowl for 0·8*d.*; a large *evo* (containing 12 small bowls) of the same grain could be had for 8*d.* One large *evo* of rice (containing 10 small bowls) is sold for 1*s.* 6*d.*, while a small bowl would be priced at 2*d.* The factor of 'waiting' plays an important part also in the economy of the individual household. When money is urgently needed, or when for other reasons the whole crop is sold in one, the seller must be prepared to accept a less favourable price. A farmer in Lemu sold his whole crop of bulrush-millet and late millet for 4*d.* a bundle, in order to have sufficient money in hand for certain urgent household expenses (the marriage ceremony of one of his sons). With his sorghum crop he could afford to go more slowly, and obtained for it prices varying from 6*d.* to 9*d.* per bundle. Another farmer, near Bida, had to sell twelve bundles of late millet and sorghum for 1*s.* per bundle, as he was pressed for money for tax, well knowing that if he could afford to sell his grain in smaller quantities he could easily obtain 1*s.* 6*d.* a bundle.

This common knowledge of price-conditions seems also to explain the lack of haggling in Nupe marketing—to the student of African peoples a rather surprising feature. Cooked food, all victuals including grain, rice, palm-oil, &c., as also the common products of tailors, blacksmiths, mat-makers, and so forth, have 'fixed prices', and buyers will never try to bargain. They might, when buying yams or fish, a mat or a hoe, poke about in the goods displayed for sale till they find the biggest or nicest-looking specimen offered at the price they are willing to pay. Real haggling and bargaining is common only with expensive, more rarely sold, commodities, the price of which is always more or less fluid, and commodities the quality and perfection of which show many gradations: embroidered cloth, a woven gown, and all products of artistic value.

The common knowledge of price-conditions is limited by existing communications and forms of economic contact. Thus we find a uniform regulation of prices only within the area in which regular contacts of this kind exist; outside it the calculation of prices and profits, and productive planning in general, is determined by the varying local conditions of supply and demand. The most striking instance of this lack of co-ordination is perhaps the backward village of Sakpe to which I have referred in a previous chapter, where the people were unaware of the fact that the kapok from their silk-cotton trees had a money value in Bida. The following example, though referring to an exchange connexion going beyond Nupe country, is no less significant: in the same village, Sakpe, I met two men from Igbira country who had come to

[1] It is not unnecessary to mention especially this aspect of Nupe economic knowledge. For it is frequently found in more primitive societies that the economic value of time is not recognized and that native producers sell their goods at a distant market for the same price as they would locally.